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The President's Daily Brief

17 June 1972

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~~*Top Secret*~~

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

17 June 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Communists appear to be moving additional forces into northern South Vietnam; otherwise, the military situation has not changed significantly. *(Page 1)*

In southern Laos, government forces are trying to retake territory north of Pakse. *(Page 2)*

Sirik Matak and some other veteran Cambodian politicians have established a new party, which evidently will oppose President Lon Nol. *(Page 3)*

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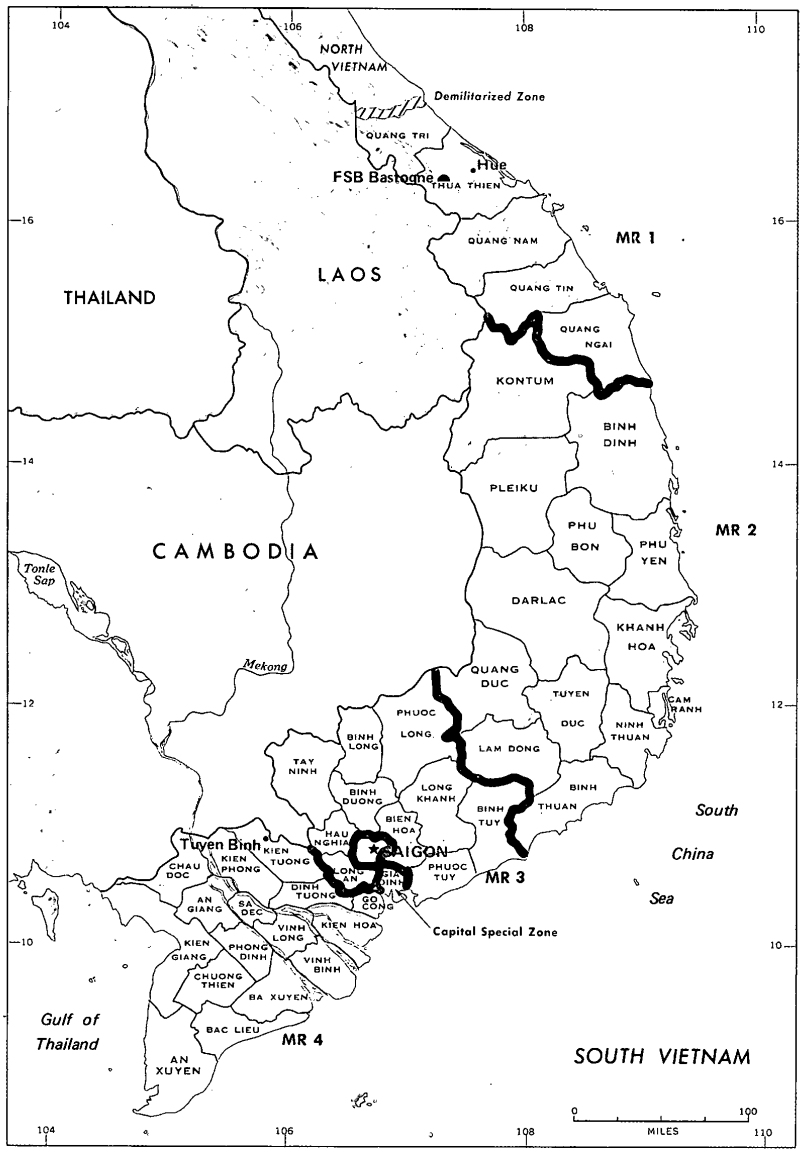

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VIETNAM

The Communists appear to be moving additional forces into northern South Vietnam. [redacted] 25X1 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

Government positions in MR-1 were subjected to fairly heavy shelling yesterday. In MR-4, fighting around Tuyen Binh district town in Kien Tuong Province has fallen off somewhat [redacted] 25X1 Communist forces were also active in parts of Kien Phong and Dinh Tuong provinces.

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

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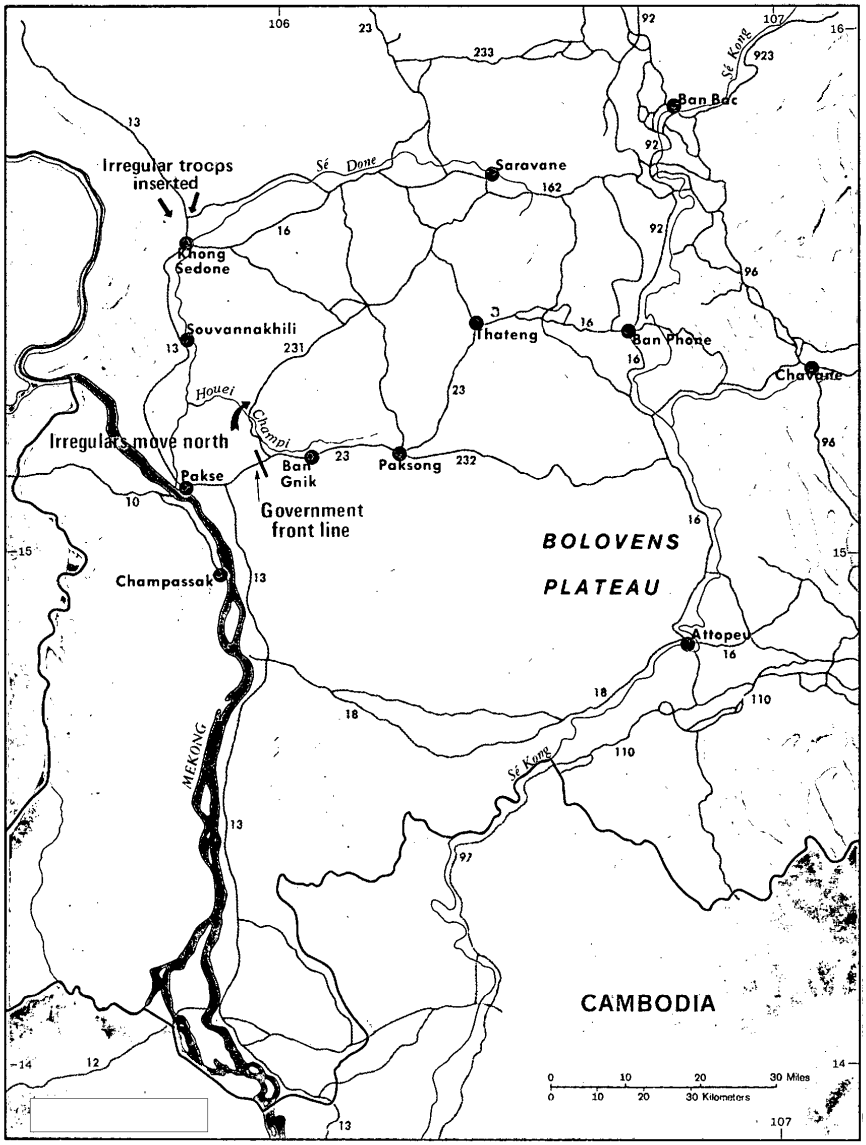
LAOS: Bolovens Plateau Area



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● Government-held location
● Communist-held location

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LAOS

Government forces are attempting to retake territory in the Pakse area of southern Laos. On Thursday four fresh irregular battalions were airlifted to a point seven miles north of Khong Sedone, the provincial capital that was lost to the Communists in mid-May. These forces have pushed through several North Vietnamese blocking positions. An additional four irregular battalions were airlifted to the west of Khong Sedone yesterday. The North Vietnamese have three battalions, together with artillery and antiaircraft units, in and near the town.

Government units have also begun an effort to clear the Communists from the area northeast of Pakse. Four irregular battalions that had been in reserve along Route 23 are moving north parallel to Route 231 along the western edge of the Bolovens Plateau and have now crossed the Houei Champi stream.

> *This thrust should prevent the North Vietnamese from diverting their 9th Regiment toward Khong Sedone and also reduce pressure on the Lao Army units holding defenses near the intersection of Routes 23 and 231.*

The situation in north Laos remains essentially unchanged. The Communists still hold most of the major high ground positions northeast of Long Tieng, and government forces have made no serious attempts to dislodge them in the past several days. The withdrawal of several battalions for rest and refitting has temporarily reduced the government's strength in this area.

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CAMBODIA

Sirik Matak and a number of other veteran politicians on 15 June established a new Republican Party, which evidently will oppose President Lon Nol. Matak will serve as secretary-general of the party. There are rumors in Phnom Penh that several senior military leaders, including Defense Minister Sak Sutsakhan, intend to join Matak's party.

The rift between Matak and Lon Nol has slowly broadened since last March, when Lon Nol jettisoned Matak under pressure from students. Matak refrained from campaigning for Lon Nol during the recent presidential election, and last week he turned down Lon Nol's offer of the vice-presidency or an ambassadorship. Matak may have interpreted the proferred post of ambassador as an attempt by Lon Nol to get him out of the country and thereby deny his considerable talents to the opposition. Lon Nol's relatively poor showing in the election most likely influenced Matak's decision to go his own way.

The first objective of Matak's new party will be to take part in the legislative elections in September. As things now stand, the government's banner in that campaign will be carried by the Socio-Republican Party, which is directed by Lon Nol's brother, Colonel Lon Non. Over the longer term, Matak is intent upon staking a serious claim to succeed Lon Nol. He seems certain to be opposed in this effort by both Lon Non and First Minister Son Ngoc Thanh, who currently are working together in the Socio-Republican Party.

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NOTE

Thailand: A Thai investigation of charges that Chinese Irregular Forces in northern Thailand are still involved in the narcotics trade out of Burma has not turned up any substantiating evidence.

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